

Standard USHC-5: The student will demonstrate an understanding of major social, political, and economic developments that took place in the United States during the second half of the nineteenth century.

USHC-5.6 Explain the influx of immigrants into the United States in the late nineteenth century in relation to the specific economic, political, and social changes that resulted, including the growth of cities and urban ethnic neighborhoods, the restrictions on immigration that were imposed, and the immigrants' responses to the urban political machines. (H, G, P, E)

Taxonomy Level: 2.2 B Understanding/ Comprehension

Previous/future knowledge:

In 5th grade, students were introduced to the importance of immigration on the development of the American economy and its impact on the growth of cities (5-3.1). They identified the countries from which immigrants came and the resistance they faced when they arrived as well as the cultural and economic contributions of immigrants to the United States (5-3.2).

In 8th grade, students compared migration patterns within South Carolina and in the United States as a whole in the late 19th century, (8-5.4) and the significance increased immigration into the United States had for the state of South Carolina, including cultural and economic contributions of immigrants, opportunities and struggles experienced by immigrants, increased racial hostility, and the effect of racial and ethnic diversity on national identity (8-5.6).

In American government, students will learn about the process of naturalization in the United States, including laws, residency and other requirements (USG-5.4).

It is essential for students to know:

Since students have already been introduced to the importance of immigration to American society and the role of immigrant labor in the economy (USHC 5.2) and in the labor movement (USHC 5.5), focus should be on the social and political role of immigrants, particularly in the growth of cities and in the urban political machines.

It is important for students to understand that many immigrants were too poor to move beyond the port cities where they landed. Thus **ethnic neighborhoods** grew as immigrants looked for the familiar in a strange new land. Churches, schools, businesses and newspapers reflected the ethnicity of Little Italy, Greektown or Polonia. Many established immigrants helped those who had newly arrived to find jobs and housing. This had a powerful impact on city politics. People voted for those who found them jobs and helped them through hard times. It is important for students to understand that immigrants gave their votes to neighborhood and ward bosses in gratitude for the help they had received, not as a result of any direct bribery. Although many political bosses were corrupt and routinely used graft and bribery in awarding city contracts, they also served an important role in helping new immigrants to adapt to their new country. The power that immigrant groups gave to the **urban political machine** allowed the bosses to solve important urban problems despite the abuses that occurred under city bosses such as New York's Boss Tweed.

Restrictions on immigration were the result of ethnic prejudices and market forces. Students should understand the term nativism, which predated the Civil War with prejudices against the Germans and the Irish. After the Civil War, westerners resented the Chinese workers who had built the railroads and Chinese immigration was restricted as a result of such prejudices. Unskilled workers objected to the practice of contracting laborers in Europe who would come to take jobs from "native" Americans and

exert a downward pressure on wages. The United States government passed a law which limited this practice. Union members also resented the immigrants who were employed as “scabs” (strikebreakers) by management. In the late 19th century, resentments focused on the immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe as the numbers of these groups grew and the differences with previous immigrant groups, (such as the English, Irish and Germans) and ‘native’ Americans were more obvious. Although further restrictions on immigration were proposed in Congress in the 1890s, they did not pass until the 1920s. Late 19th century nativism can be seen as another expression of Social Darwinism.

Reformers, such as Jane Addams, served the immigrant population through the establishment of settlement houses, such as Hull House, to aid the immigrants in their assimilation into American culture (USHC 5.7).

It is not essential for students to know:

Students do not need to know that social reform movements started in the pre-Civil War period and continued to be directed at assimilating new immigrants in the late 19th century. The temperance movement was directed at ethnic groups whose cultures were associated with drink such as the Irish and Germans and later applied to Italians. The public school movement was promoted to teach the newly arrived about democracy and the Protestant religion of the American majority. Consequently Roman Catholic immigrant groups developed their own parochial school system.

Ethnic neighborhoods were not completely homogeneous and a single ethnic group did not necessarily make up the majority of an ethnic neighborhood. Although students should know Boss Tweed, they do not need to know the names of other political bosses.

Students do not need to be able to name the Chinese Exclusion Act or the Foran Contract Labor Law. The Chinese Exclusion Act, passed in 1882, existed for 10 years but a 1902 law continued the trend by excluding the Chinese indefinitely.

Assessment guidelines:

Appropriate assessments will require students to **explain** the impact of immigration on city life and city government and on the efforts to restrict immigration. Students should be able to **classify** and identify **examples** of these changes. They should be able to **interpret** maps, graphs and political cartoons and **infer** their relationship to information about the time period. Assessments will ask students to **summarize** the impact of immigrants on city life and government, **interpret** its significance for American democracy and **infer** its impact on the movement for immigration restriction.